new masses

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EASTERN EUROPE

NEW ROADS TO SOCIALISM

BY EUGENE VARGA

NM PORTRAIT

THE EDUCATION OF THEODORE WARD

By DENNIS GOBBINS

see pages 2 and 7

EUROPE'S INTELLECTUALS SPEAK OUT FOR HOWARD FAST AND HANNS EISLER

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O. John Rogge (center) and Angus Cameron (right) shown with Howard Fast at the rally to defend Mr. Fast sponsored by New Masses and "Mainstream," October 16 in New York. Louis Untermeyer was chairman. Other speakers in addition to those pictured above were: Shirley Graham, Albert E. Kahn, Rackham Holt, Henry Pratt Fairchild, Maxine Wood, Alan Lomax, Kenneth Leslie, Theodore Ward, Richard O. Boyer, Joseph North, Artie Shaw, Arthur Miller, Samuel Sillen and Rev. Stephen Fritchman. Among those who sent statements of support were: Louis Adamic, Peter Blume, Millen Brand, Norman Cousins, Albert Deutsch, Olin Downes, William Gropper, Langston Hughes, A. J. Liebling, Eve Merriam, Willard Motley, Vincent Sheean, Sam Wanamaker, Max Weber, Aubrey Williams and Jay Williams. The large and enthusiastic meeting demanded a halt to the Un-American Committee's attack upon Mr. Fast and other progressives.

FRANCE SPEAKS

LEADERS of French letters and thought protest the action of the Un-American Committee against a great American novelist, Howard Fast. They write to him:

"At this moment when the future of civilization depends upon agreement among those peoples devoted to the principle of peace, we want to let you know that the reading of your books in France constitutes a powerful argument against those who would destroy the friendship of the French for the American people.

"By recreating in your novels the great historical personages of America, you demonstrate to other peoples the strength and continuity of the democratic traditions of your people. For this reason we find it impossible to believe that you could be felled by a decision, the very nature of which would cast doubt upon this American tradition—of which you have come to be one of the outstanding spiritual ambassadors in your country."

(*Signed*)

PAUL LEBRUN, *Secretary, General Confederation of Labor*
PABLO CASALS, *Musician*
M. R. BLOCH
DR. DIRCUING, *Director of Toulouse Medical Center*
JEAN CASSOU, *Director, Museum of Modern Art*
PAUL ELUARD, *Poet; President, French-Spanish Committee*
HENRY MALHERBE, *Director of the Opera Comique*
MARCEL GIMOND, *Sculptor; Professor of the Beaux-Arts*
EDMOND VERMEIL, *Professor at the Sorbonne*
HENRI WALLON, *Professor of the College de France*
JEAN LONGEVIN, *Professor, Faculty of Sciences of Paris*
AUBEL, *Professor of the Faculty of Sciences of Paris*
MME. F. SECLET-RIOU, *Inspectress of Primary Education*
LABEYIRE, *Mayor of Versailles; Former Governor, Bank of France*
JEAN PAINLEVEL, *Director, Scientific and Technical Centers of Conservatory of Arts and Sciences*
ROGER DESORMIERE, *Director of the Paris Opera*
PAUL COLIN, *Poster Artist*
JACQUES HADAMARD, *Professor of the French Institute*
GUSTAV MONOD, *Director of Secondary Education*
DR. LUCIEN DE GENNES, *Professor, Paris Faculty of Medicine*
RAOUL LAMOURDEDIEU, *Sculptor; V.-P., Salon D'Automne*
HENRI LAURENS, *Sculptor*
JEAN LURCAT, *Painter*
MME. ELSA BARRAINE, *Holder of the Prix de Rome in Music*
MARCEL PRENANT, *Professor at the Sorbonne*
CHARLES VILDRAC, *Writer*
JEAN WIENER, *Musician-Composer*
ANDRE LUGUET, *President of the Syndicate of Actors*
PIERRE RENOIR, *Actor; President, Federation of Theaters*
GEORGES FRIEDMAN, *Professor*
DANIEL FLORENTIN, *Engineer*
JEAN PAULHAN, *Writer*
PIERRE BLANCHAR, *Actor; Pres., National Union of Theaters*
ANDREE VIOLLIS, *Writer*
EDITH THOMAS, *Writer*
FRANCIS JOURDAIN, *Honorary Pres., Union of Modern Artists*
ARAGON, *Writer; Gen. Secy., National Committee of Writers*
GEORGES TESSIER, *Dir., Natl. Center of Scientific Research*
FREDERIC JOLIOT-CURIE, *Nobel Prize Winner*
ARMAND SALACROU, *Playwright*
C. DELVINCOURT, *Director, Paris Conservatory of Music*
JEAN GAUDRAY RETY, *Journalist*
PAULINE RAMART, *Member, Paris Faculty of Sciences*
CHARLES KOECHLIN, *Musician, Composer*
GEORGE HUISMAN, *Attorney*
LOUIS MARTIN-CHAUFFIER, *Pres., National Comm. of Writers*
IRENE JOLIOT-CURIE, *Nobel Prize Winner, Prof. at Sorbonne*
LE CORBUSIER, *Architect*
ELSA TRIOLET, *Writer*
CHAPELON, *Professor of the Polytechnic School*
CLAUDE ANDRE PUGET, *Playwright*
LEON MOUSSINAC, *Director of Institute of Cinematic Studies*
RENE CLEMENT, *Theatrical Director*

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EASTERN EUROPE

NEW ROADS TO SOCIALISM

By EUGENE VARGA

One of the most important political results of the Second World War is the emergence of democratic states of a new type: Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and, also, Albania. We understand by a "democracy of a new type" a state of affairs in a country where feudal remnants—large-scale landownership—have been eliminated, where the system of private ownership of the means of production still exists but large enterprises in the spheres of industry, transport and credit are in state hands, while the state itself and its apparatus of coercion serve not the interests of a monopolistic bourgeoisie but the interests of the workng people in town and countryside.

The social structure of these States differs from all those hitherto known to us; it is something totally new in the history of mankind. It is neither a bourgeois dictatorship nor a proletarian dictatorship. The old state apparatus has not been smashed, as in the Soviet Union, but reorganized by means of a continuous inclusion in it of the supporters of the new regime. They are not capitalist states in the ordinary sense of the word. Neither, however, are they socialist states. The basis for their transition to socialism is given by the nationalization of the most important means of production and by the essential character of the state. They may, with the maintenance of the present state apparatus, gradually pass over to socialism, developing to an ever-increasing extent the socialist sector which already exists side by side with the simple commodity sector (peasant and artisan) and the capitalist sector, which has lost its dominant position.

The general historical prerequisite, applying in all cases, for the emergence of these states of democracy of a new type is the general crisis of capitalism, which has very considerably intensified in consequence of the Second World War.

The historical conditions specific to these countries are:

1. The discrediting of the ruling classes and their political parties in the eyes of the broad masses of the people, as a result of their policy of collaboration with Hitler fascism before and during the war, which led to the occupation of these countries by German troops and the fierce suppression and impoverishment of the working class.

2. The leading role of the Communist parties in the resistance movement, as a result of which unity of the working class was achieved and a people's front formed for struggle against fascism, large-scale landownership and big capital—the economic basis of fascism.

3. The moral, diplomatic and economic support which these countries find in the Soviet Union. Without this support the states of democracy of a new type would be hard put to it to withstand the attacks of reaction, both external and internal. Very edifying in this respect is the fate of Greece.

The following features are characteristic of the *economy* of the states of a democracy of a new type:

Private ownership of the means of production continues to exist; the peasant is the owner of his land, the artisan of his workshop, the trader of his shop, the small capitalist of his factory. Big enterprises, however, in mining, industry, transport and banking are nationalized and are under state management. There still exists the appropriation of surplus value, but it is restricted to a relatively narrow sphere[1] —not only because there is considerably less privately-owned capital but also because the trade unions and the state successfully protect the workers against the capitalists.

We would like, here, to stress the decisive significance of the special character of the state for the development of the economies of these countries. Where the state is controlled by monopoly capital and serves its interests it can own a very considerable part of the means of production without in the slightest degree altering the character of the social system. In Hitler Germany the railways, Imperial Bank, Discount Bank, Prussian State Bank, large industrial enterprises (*e.g.* Hermann Goering-Werke), power stations, agricultural and forest areas, etc., were the property of the Reich, individual lands or municipalities. The existence of such considerable public property, however, did not at all alter the fact that the economy of Hitler Germany remained a monopolistic economy and the social order a bourgeois one. The change in the character of the state—its transformation from a weapon of domination in the hands of the propertied classes into the state of the working people—this is what determines the real significance of the transfer of a decisive part of the means of production into the hands of the

[1] The bourgeoisie, nevertheless, which still almost entirely dominates in the sphere of trade, receives large profits, thanks to the sale of the commodities of the socialized enterprises; withal it frequently enjoys the support of former officials who have remained in the state apparatus.

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state in the countries of a democracy of a new type.

The change in the character of the state explains also why the influence of nationalization on the distribution of the national revenue is totally different in the democratic states of a new type from that in the bourgeois-democratic countries such as Great Britain.

Nationalization in the new democratic states signifies a special sort of economic revolution. The property of traitors to the country, of fascist capitalists, was confiscated without compensation. Other big capitalists received compensation, but their income after compensation was only a small part of the surplus value which they previously appropriated.[2]

The contradictions between the social character of production and the private character of appropriation have sharpened to such a degree as the result of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism that in the postwar period the wave of nationalization has embraced almost all countries with fully-developed capitalist relations, with the exception of the US. Nationalization in these countries *is an attempt to solve the contradictions between the social character of production and the private character of appropriation within the framework of the bourgeois social system.*

It is precisely this which explains the introduction of nationalization *with full compensation for the capitalists.* Thus in Britain, for example, the share-holders of electricity companies were given compensation to the amount of £450,000,000 sterling. This sum was calculated on the basis of the Stock Exchange value of the shares before nationalization. Similarly, compensation amounting to £1,035,000,000 was fixed for owners of transport enterprises due to be nationalized. This means that the shareholders were not harmed. The distribution of the national income remains almost unchanged.[3]

These various methods of carrying out nationalization show the difference between a bourgeois democracy and a democracy of the new type.

The economic importance of the nationalization of big industrial enterprises naturally differs very greatly in various countries of democracy of a new type. In countries where agriculture predominates and where industrial development is inconsiderable —Bulgaria and Yugoslavia—its importance is relatively less. In Poland, which has a big coal mining and heavy industry, the importance of nationalization is far greater, the more so as it extends also to industrial enterprises of medium size. In Czechoslovakia, which is much more highly developed industrially, and where industry was expanded by the Germans during the war, nationalizaton plays the greatest role, despite the fact that in this country it embraces a smaller number of medium enterprises than in Poland. While industry in Yugoslavia and prewar Poland was almost completely destroyed during the war, the industry of Czechoslovakia suffered extremely little from military operations. The fact that in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia it was not necessary to nationalize so many individual plants does not detract from the importance of this measure for the future economic development of these countries, which are being transformed from agrarian appendages of Germany, as they were before the war, into independent agrarian-industrial countries.

The second important feature of the economies of the countries of democracy of a new type is the complete and final elimination of large-scale landlordism, of this feudal survival inside the capitalist system of economy. The social and political power of the big landowners, dating back a thousand years, has been destroyed. The big landed properties were confiscated by the state and distributed among peasants having little land and landless agricultural laborers. The number of peasant households (*i.e.* private owners of land) increased very considerably in these countries.

The division of the lands among many hundreds of thousands of peasants who had little or no land has converted the overwhelming majority of these peasants into loyal supporters of the new regime. The mistake made by the Hungarian Communists in 1919, when they wanted to leap over an essential historical stage by converting the confiscated large landed properties into state farms, instead of dividing them up among the peasants and so satisfying the land hunger, has nowhere been repeated.

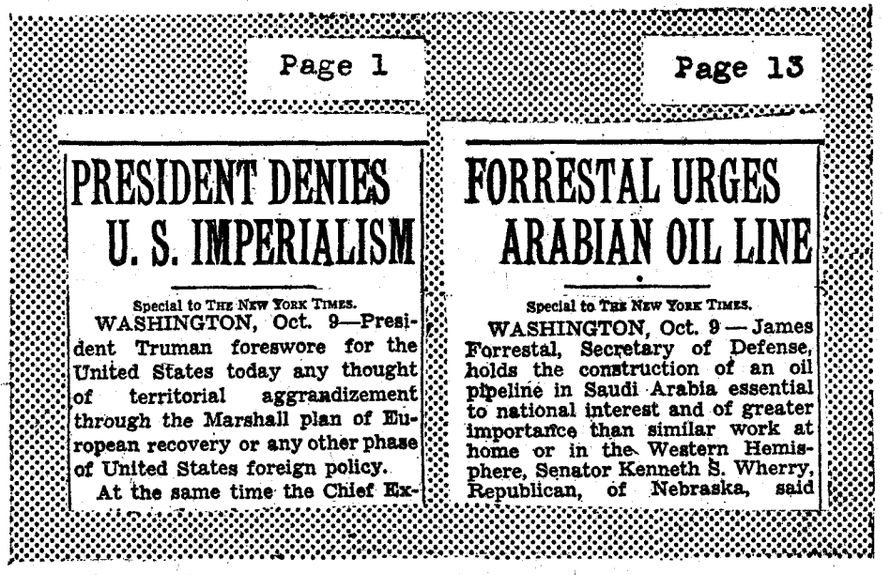
The cultivation of land by the peasants using their own resources and giving them the opportunity of selling their produce on the market (in some countries only after fulfilling tax payments and deliveries to the state) make possible the preservation or reemergence of commodity capitalist relations in the economy of the country. As Lenin pointed out "small-scale production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale."[4]

Thus, the social order in the states of democracy of a new type is not a socialist order, but a peculiar, new, transitional form. The contradiction between the productive forces and re-

[2] Difficulties arose in connection with the fact that British and American capitalists were partners in numerous enterprises taken over by the state. Many capitalists, who have fled abroad, are rapidly becoming American citizens and demanding, with the support of the authorities of their new "motherland," full compensation or the return of their enterprises.

[3] Nevertheless, bourgeois nationalization also signifies progress in the direction of the new type of democracy.

[4] Lenin, Selected Works X., p. 60.



Page 1

PRESIDENT DENIES U. S. IMPERIALISM

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9—President Truman foreswore for the United States today any thought of territorial aggrandizement through the Marshall plan of European recovery or any other phase of United States foreign policy.

At the same time the Chief Ex-

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FORRESTAL URGES ARABIAN OIL LINE

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9 — James Forrestal, Secretary of Defense, holds the construction of an oil pipeline in Saudi Arabia essential to national interest and of greater importance than similar work at home or in the Western Hemisphere, Senator Kenneth S. Wherry, Republican, of Nebraska, said

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lations of production becomes mitigated in proportion as the relative weight of the socialist sector increases.

The nationalization of the land of big landowners and its distribution among the peasants had a different significance in different countries. In peasant countries like Bulgaria and old Serbia there existed no large-scale land ownership in the proper sense of the word. Only a relatively small amount of land could be distributed among the peasants there. In other parts of Yugoslavia, previously belonging to Hungary, *e.g.* in Croatia and the Banat, considerably more land could be distributed. In Czechoslovakia, an agrarian reform was carried out already after the First World War: here the estates, first and foremost of expelled Germans, were distributed among the peasants.

In Poland the agrarian reform is of decisive importance for the political development of the country. Here the position of the peasantry was at its worst. *"Polonia infernum rusticorum"* —"Poland is the peasant's hell" was said of it already some hundreds of years ago. Here landownership of the feudal type was retained in its entirety, both on the territory of prewar Poland and in the Western districts which were previously under German domination. The elimination of landlordism opens up a new era in the economic and political life of Poland.

IT IS quite clear that the class of big landowners by no means intends to accept these changes peacefully but is resisting the new regime in every way. Nationalization of the land does not mean that the big landowners immediately lose their political influence. True, some of them fled abroad, but many remained inside the country. A considerable part of their property was in the form of valuables, works of art, furniture, houses, which remained in their hands. In many cases the former big landowners, *e.g.* in Poland, succeeded in penetration into the state apparatus, above all into the agricultural administration, and in sabotaging the carrying out of the agrarian reform. More important still is the fact that there remained in the country a stratum of people enjoying some influence, whose existence wholly or partially depended on the big landowners. Among these are the rural clergy, notaries, judges and teachers, who regularly received money, food, firewood, etc., from the landowners; various estate employes, agronomists and other persons who were in the service of the landlord; state officials, judges, officers, who obtained their posts through the influence of the landlord; deputies elected by the population at his behest. In short, the elimination of the economic basis of the power of the agrarians does not signify simultaneous destruction of their political influence inside the country.

The same can be said of the big bourgeoisie. Although their enterprises were nationalized, in the majority of cases considerable personal property still remained in their hands. A large part of the former managers, leading engineers and other persons in the service of this bourgeoisie remained in the nationalized enterprises. To this day, persons sponsored by the big bourgeoisie are to be found in the state apparatus and the various economic organizations—Chambers of Commerce and so forth—which continue to exist. The representatives of the big bourgeoisie have close contacts with the middle bourgeoisie, whose enterprises have not been expropriated. Since the nationalization of their enterprises they have not yet completely lost their influence.

Here too the general rule that changes in the economic basis do not immediately evoke corresponding changes in politics continues to operate. Deprived of their economic power, the landlords together with the expropriated and unexpropriated capitalists and their adherents fight with every means at their disposal against the new democratic regime, organize oppositional political parties and through priests, teachers and notaries already debauched by them conduct agitation among the new peasants (who often lack the necessary means of production) for giving back land to the landlords. They frighten the peasants by telling them they will be hanged in the event of the old system being restored, because they "stole" the land. They organize plots against the government, arm bandits, etc. They seek and find active support in reactionary circles abroad.

The big bourgeoisie, still to a degree playing a dominant part in home and foreign trade,[5] struggles against the new regime in the economic sphere as well, attempting to plunder the state and discredit the social system. With the help of accomplices bribed by them in the state enterprises and the state apparatus they often obtain commodi-

[5] The cooperative bodies are still not sufficiently strong to squeeze out private capital in the circulation of commodities, and in many cases they are tied still to the capitalists.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

Excited British ladies are reported paying as high as $300 for a seat along the route of the royal wedding procession. For that price they could get a Greek Royalist of their own.

•

President Truman described rent control, rationing and price control as police-state methods. There can be no doubt that they are preferable to the present fleece-state system.

•

Admiral Halsey's memoirs say that he doesn't trust a fighting man who doesn't drink or smoke. A lot of Navy men who never smoked before are now burning.

•

Halsey is emulating an even more ancient mariner who moaned "Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink."

•

A kennel official urges that dogs be allowed to help the conservation program by observing meatless Tuesday. For variety Truman is now leading the dogs to the country.

•

Secretary Marshall has told the CIO that unions are the first target of a police state. This was the first time the union's convention has ever been threatened by a guest speaker.

•

George E. Sokolsky says that the US should offer better protection to ex-Communists who want to testify. Could he mean that one of these individuals has been viciously assaulted by his conscience?

•

The nation's brewers have pledged a twenty-five percent cut in the use of corn. Now if the radio comedians . . .

•

Homer Loomis, Jr., the ex-Columbian, Inc., fuehrer, has joined forces with Gerald L. K. Smith. The fascists are putting all their yeggs in one basket.

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ties at less than cost price, hide them, send them to foreign countries or sell them inside the country exclusively in exchange for gold or foreign currency. The representatives of the big bourgeoisie try to cause inflation or increase the existing inflation, thereby to provoke dissatisfaction among the working people and turn them against the new regime.

In a word, it is by no means a peaceful idyll that reigns in the countries of new democracy but, on the contrary, a sharp, extremely fierce class struggle that is in progress, just as in the old capitalist countries.

As regards the class struggle, however, there exists a difference in principle between the states of democracy of a new type and the old bourgeois countries. In the old bourgeois countries the state is a weapon of domination in the hands of the propertied classes. The entire state apparatus—officials, judges, police and as a last resort, the standing army—*is on the side of the propertied classes.*[6]

The opposite is to be seen in the countries of new democracy. Here the state protects the interests of the working people against those who live by appropriating surplus value. When conflicts arise the armed forces of the state are to be be found, not on the side of the capitalists, but on the side of the workers. It is wholly inconceivable that the armies of these states should be used against the working people. State officials and judges serve the interests of the working people.

This distinction vividly demonstrates the fact that power is in the hands of the people—the new character of the state in the countries indicated. The state influences the economic life of the country far more and in a different direction than in the old bourgeois countries, though there too the economic functions of the state have greatly extended as compared with the pre-war period. In the countries of democracy of a new type, however, the trend of economic policy is different in principle. In the capitalist countries the economic policy of the state serves the interests of maintaining the existing social order in general and the interests of monopoly capital in particular.

In the states of democracy of a new type economic policy is directed to strengthening and developing the socialized sector of economy, accelerating economic development, improving the position of the working people, establishing a fair distribution of income in accordance with services rendered to society. To raise the standard of life of the whole people requires an increased output of production. The economic policy, therefore, aims at the utmost development of the productive forces and the elimination of restrictions on their development caused under capitalism by the scramble for profits.

To realize these aims, the states of a democracy of a new type seek to influence the development of the economy in a planned way. Economic plans calculated over several years have been drawn up.

It is obvious that there can be no planned economy, as understood in the USSR, in these countries. It is impossible owing to the presence of private ownership of the means of production. Genuine planned economy is possible only under socialism, when all the means of production are nationalized.

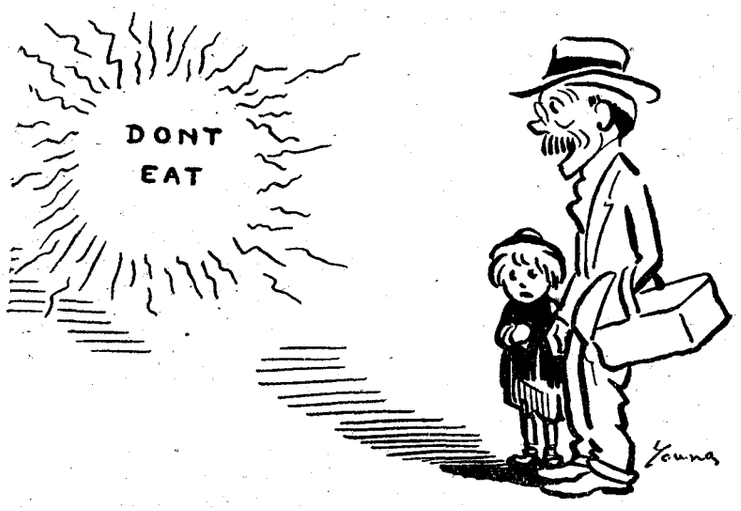
However, nationalization of the decisive enterprises in mining, industry, transport and credit gives the state of new democracy far greater possibility than in the case of the states of monopoly capital to influence the small private producers by means of planning their economic activity, the more so because the planned influence of the state is in the interests of the overwhelming majority of these small private producers, primarily the peasantry and is not against their interests. Undoubtedly, this influence will increase as the countries of new democracy become more industrialized. All these facts show that the planned influence of the state on the economy of the countries of new democracy is sufficiently effective not only to be an obstacle to their reconversion into capitalist social systems of the old type, but also to encourage the development of these countries in the direction of socialism. Not only does the general line of historical development push them along this road, but also concrete practical needs.

Thus, for example, many former agricultural workers have been given land but do not possess the means of production, tractive power and implements, with which to cultivate it. The means of production of the big estates — tractors, steam-ploughs, etc. — distributed among the peasants are unsuitable for cultivating small peasant plots. The new rural proprietors, lacking the means of production, are threatened by the danger of becoming economically dependent on the prosperous peasants who, for money, or part of the harvest or labor, will cultivate their lands.

The practical needs of the peasants who possess land but not the means of production, urge them, therefore, toward joint cultivation of the land, in order to make use of the existing means

[6] This does not, of course, prevent the organs of the bourgeois state in certain cases settling wage disputes between capitalists and workers in favor of the latter. This, however, never happens should it threaten the foundations of the bourgeois social system—private ownership of the means of production. The passage of social legislation—the shorter working day, health insurance, unemployment benefits—can be explained by the well-understood interests of the bourgeoisie.

Flashback for Today



Mr. Armour of the Meat Trust says: "The consumer could protect himself in a measure from high prices by refraining from purchasing." Brilliant idea.—Art Young in the "Masses," March, 1919.

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of production which can only be used to advantage on a big farm. Various forms of artels have arisen. In a number of artels the peasants jointly plow and cultivate the land. After this the boundaries of the individual plots are reestablished and each peasant gathers the harvest on his own field.

In Bulgaria, where old traditions of cultivating the land on a cooperative basis exist, cooperatives for joint cultivation of the land have been formed on a voluntary basis. All the land of the members of the cooperative (which often includes all the peasants of a village) is cultivated jointly and the harvesting is also done jointly. But the harvest is distributed not according to the purely socialist principle of the number of days worked: besides the number of days worked, account is also taken of the size of the land which the peasant put at the disposal of the cooperative and also the amount of the means of production put in. Hence, this is a compromise between the socialist principle and one based on private ownership of the means of production. It is a solution of the problem which corresponds to the transitional character of the social system.

By giving support to this new type of agricultural cooperative in the form of credits, tractors and seed, etc., the government encourages its development and extension and influences the development of the economy in a progressive direction.

The second and concluding installment of Mr. Varga's article will appear next week.

The Hanns Eisler Case:

BRITAIN'S COMPOSERS SPEAK

October 8, 1947

His Excellency the Ambassador
of the United States
The Embassy of the United States
1, Grosvenor Square
London, W. 1.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: The attention of the Composers Guild of Great Britain has been drawn to the present situation of our esteemed and distinguished colleague, the German refugee composer Hanns Eisler, who since 1938 has been resident in the US, except for a visit to Mexico in connection with a film about that country for which he wrote the music.

Hanns Eisler is one of the most famous living composers of film music and the author of an important book entitled *Composing for the Films* which has recently been published by the Oxford University Press.

During the present year Mr. Eisler has been the victim of a continuous campaign of vilification in the American press in connection with the legal proceedings which are being taken against his brother, Gerhart Eisler.

The Composers Guild is quite aware that your government cannot be held responsible for the contents of American newspaper articles, but shortly after this campaign started Mr. Eisler, who had been offered work on a French film, was for no apparent reason refused an exit permit to France by the US authorities, a department of the government administration. The result of the press campaign has been to make it difficult for Mr. Eisler, despite his high reputation, to obtain further contracts for film music or other work, so that the action of the US authorities in refusing him an exit permit was the equivalent of condemning him to death by starvation.

Recently there have been further developments. Mr. Eisler has been called to appear before the House Committee for Un-American Activities. At this hearing he was denied the opportunity of cross-examining witnesses either himself or through legal counsel, a circumstance which places the proceedings of this committee on a lower level than legal proceedings in Nazi Germany during the years 1933-39. The House committee has expressed its intentions of trying to force a deportation order on Mr. Eisler on a charge of perjury, which he is alleged to have committed in connection with his return to the US from Mexico in 1940. Such a deportation order will condemn Mr. Eisler to incarceration in a concentration camp in the American zone of Germany. Mr. Eisler, who is partly of Jewish extraction and who has earned by his activities during the past twenty years a most honorable position as a consistent opponent of fascism and Nazism, cannot be expected to remain alive for long in a concentration camp inhabited by Nazi war criminals. The House committee is thus condemning Mr. Eisler to execution without trial.

The Executive Committee of the Composers Guild, an organization which unites practically every composer of both serious and light music in this country, has instructed me as their chairman to convey to your Excellency the grave concern which we all feel at the danger in which our fellow composer, Hanns Eisler, is now placed. The Composers Guild therefore most earnestly requests you to exert your utmost influence in this matter. Your government's action in refusing an exit permit on the mere instigation of a press campaign suggests that it may be compliant to the demands of the House committee for the deportation of Mr. Eisler. We ask that an exit permit be granted should he apply at any time in the future for such a permit, thus to avert what amounts to a sentence of death, a non-judicial sentence of death, upon this outstanding musical artist, who has done so much to earn the gratitude of the civilized world for his active and unremitting efforts to resist fascism and Nazism.

Awaiting your reply, I remain, Your Excellency,
Yours very sincerely,
PROF. ALAN BUSH,
Chairman, Composers Guild of Great Britain.

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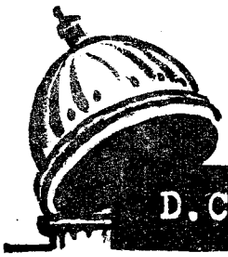

D.C. dateline--

It Isn't the Heat

Washington.

FOR several days the humidity in this city has hovered around 97 or 98 percent, which means the air is so laden with moisture that a sudden loud noise, like the backfiring of a bus, is enough to precipitate a shower. This isn't good weather for correspondents afflicted with sinuses or the pipe-smoking habit. Falling into both categories, I was already depressed when I arose the other morning, even before I found my pipe tobacco virtually dripping.

I stole into the kitchen, heaped a frying-pan full of the soggy tobacco, lit the oven and inserted the pan. Probably it would have worked except that I upset the pan and burned one of my two typewriter fingers. Consequently I was nursing a painful sinus and a disagreeable blister all day.

I go into some detail as to these tribulations because they may have some relation to my rather jaundiced approach to some of the events hereinafter discussed.

First, the French local elections. I was prepared for news of setbacks for the French Communist Party, perhaps serious, perhaps slight. The fact that the party of the French working class held its own—and perhaps did more than that—was something of a miracle. I would say that because during the six days leading up to October 19, the Truman administration shoveled $247,000,000 into the coffers of the Ramadier government. First there was the announcement by the State Department's stooge, the Export-Import Bank, that $93,000,000 of the unspent balance of the $650,000,000 grant of July, 1946, would be made available to Ramadier immediately for the purchase of fuel. Then came President Truman's authorization for the Army to buy $50,000,000 worth of francs. Late Friday, just in time to get under the wire before the Sunday voting, came news that by prodigious effort, the State Department had secured $104,000,000 for France from the gold pot of Nazi loot.

If there are any students of political science in the audience who want to know exactly how this was done, I'll send them a detailed explanation on receipt of a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the meantime, it is enough to say the methods of the State Department, while probably legal, were highly ingenious, original and, as far as I know, unprecedented. They were born of the administration's desperation when it became clear that the Republicans would not join the President in calling a special session to appropriate funds for what is inaccurately described here as "stop-gap aid." The term must be rejected because, although the dollars will undoubtedly be used to purchase needed wheat and fuel, their real function was that of a political campaign chest for Ramadier and de Gaulle. Distinctly this policy will be a feather in the cap of de Gaulle, who is the champion of even more extreme dependence on the United States and hostility to the Soviet Union than the present government shows.

The opening of negotiations between France and the USSR for Soviet wheat would indicate that even without dollars, the French nation can escape hunger. The US gold is a bird in hand; Soviet wheat is still in the offing.

WHEN President Truman casually remarked at his press conference the other day that price control, rationing and rent ceilings are the methods of the police state, I was so astounded I kept my eyes glued on the President. But I missed a trick, according to other reporters. One of them watched the presidential advisers, who sit in a half circle behind Mr. Truman's desk during the sessions with newsmen. He told me Clark Clifford exhibited all the symptoms of extreme agitation. The smart young ghost-writer shook his head, clenched and unclenched his fists, and his lips moved as if he were talking to himself.

But Mr. Truman wasn't telepathic that day. When an astonished correspondent repeated the question, the President repeated the answer. Anything, he said, that requires police power to enforce is the method of a police state.

It was a reversion to the ancient metaphysics of factors. There is a quality of police-stateness. This quality exists in an almost measurable degree in certain things. To the extent it exists in them, these things partake of the oneness of that quality and are all akin. Thus food rationing, rent ceilings and price control are a part of something which in its purest form is the police state of Hitler. Controls are therefore evil. Q.E.D.

It is depressing to see the head of a great state defeated by a problem which a freshman in his first semester of formal logic would take in his stride. But it is also very revealing. Mr. Truman by his off-hand remarks exposed his complete agreement with the theorists of the National Association of Manufacturers who consider the most moderate restriction on the privileges of big business as sinful.

If we return to price controls *sub regno Trumanis* it will be over the objections of the administration and only because the demands of labor and the people are so powerful they cannot be longer ignored.

THE longer Senator Taft continues his barnstorming political campaign, the sharper become his attacks on the administration's foreign policy. On the other hand, Republican Congressmen returning from Europe have been deliberately frightened by stories of the Red menace peddled them by State Department representatives abroad and by heads of anti-Communist governments seeking handouts. They are prepared, they say, to vote funds for Germany and western Europe. Indications are that when the GOP strategy committee makes its final decision on the Marshall Plan, Republicans will permit Congress to appropriate about half what the President recommends.

A. L. J.

LIGHTS . . . CAMERA!

Under glaring kleig lights and amid the whir of motion picture and television cameras, a strange spectacle is being staged in our nation's capital. J. Parnell Thomas sits in the director's chair at the making of this new feature presentation of Un-American Productions, Inc. Movie producers, actors, writers and characters are there from Hollywood. Big names and big men, little men and crawling things, heroes and villains—they're all there. And so is NEW MASSES. Editor Joseph North is in the studio, looking, listening, talking to the cast—writing. Don't miss his vivid report next week in NM.

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The Education of Theodore Ward

The life of the author of "Our Lan' " is a dramatic story of a man's fight for truth. An NM portrait.

By DENNIS GOBBINS

THE author of the new American play *Our Lan'* is what theater folk call a "slow study." There are "quick" and "slow studies," referring to the length of time it takes an actor to learn his sides.

The contemporary theater has many quick studies, such as William Saroyan. The slow studies include Sean O'Casey, Lillian Hellman and Bernard Shaw, whose first play was produced when he was forty-eight. Theodore Ward, a forty-year-old Negro playwright from Louisiana, has the slowness of Job. He has written seven plays, of which three have been produced in ten years. His generation of US playwrights—the comets of the Theater Union, the Group Theater and the Federal Theater—are dead and gone to Hollywood. Ward is still a practicing playwright. He persists in his measured, painful and stubborn assault on what GI audiences used to call "the live movies." Ward has seen the ranks of those who write about life thinned in sanguinary engagements. He has seen their embalmed bodies carried to Hollywood. He still thinks it is good to write honest plays and he fights with infantry patience to get them to an audience. In this wretched ebb of the American theater *Our Lan'* is one of the few plays on Broadway whose author is interested in the ordinary people.

The playwright is a trim, slightly-built man with a level, undemonstrative manner. He lives in a brownstone house in Woodside, Long Island, with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

Ward was born in Thibodaux, Louisiana, the seat of Lafourche Parish, in the rich sugar cane and truck-farming delta forty miles west of New Orleans. He was the eighth child and his mother died giving birth to her eleventh. His father was an upright Christian schoolmaster, a wonderful story-teller who sold books and patent medicines from his horse and gig to those who were not welcome in doctor's offices and libraries. The boy's maternal grandfather was killed in a "race riot." The following economic tale is what is known as a race riot:

The grandfather was a leader of several hundred field workers in Lafourche Parish who had moved into Thibodaux a few years after the Emancipation. They were trying to get their fifty-cent daily wage raised to seventy-five cents by requiring the planters to come to town to hire labor, a sort of primitive hiring-hall principle. The planters came to town with rifles. Ward's grandfather was bidden from his house by a planter known to the family. The employer said, "Sorry, John, but I've got to do it," and shot him dead. Ward's mother kept the bullet and showed it to her children but she would not tell them the planter's name.

The playwright's paternal grandmother had no right hand. It had been cut off by her owner because she had learned to write. Her master was clearly a premature adherent of the Rankin - Thomas Committee. The good writing hand of her grandson later produced in *Our Lan'*, the first major work of art on the Civil War theme since Upton Sinclair's *Manassas* of 1904.

There was a library in Thibodaux, but Negroes were not allowed to read its books. Young Ted's father, however, sold religious, practical and classical works from his far-traveling gig on the basis of specimen first chapters. The playwright's first adventures in reading were these tantalizing specimens, mere overtures to books. Some of them still haunt and elude him.

His father believed in the philosophy of Booker T. Washington, the solace of a people cheated of freedom after the post-bellum struggle portrayed in *Our Lan'*. He believed in religion, thrift and Booker T. Washington. Under his guidance the family gatherings discussed such canonical riddles as, "Should a good Negro person pat his foot when listening to jazz music?" —a new disturbing devilment from New Orleans, whose Joshuan cornets were crying across delta and cane before the First World War.

TED's mother died when he was thirteen; the silver chord was loosed and the boy was ready to roam. The great Negro migration of the First World War to the industrial cities of the Midwest had opened up the horizon. Ted hopped the blinds of the Panama Limited to Chicago, and at 3 A.M. of a rainy autumn morning in Cairo, Illinois, he was discovered and thrown off the train. The brakemen who had dislodged him examined their prize by the rays of their lanterns; one of them laughed in a friendly manner and told the boy to take cover in a tool-shed off the right-of-way. After the railroadman took his train to the division point, he came back for Ted in a gasoline car.

Aboard this jeep of the rails, Ted expanded and told his benefactor that he was going home to a rich uncle in St. Louis after running away from school down South. The brakeman kept a diplomatic mien. He dismounted in front of his house in the early dawn and asked the boy to wait outside while he made breakfast, explaining that his wife was not up yet. Out of the house came the baby son of the brakeman and he and the rich adventurer played in the fallen leaves. Mrs. Brakeman got up and yelled for Ted to come to breakfast. "I was inured to prejudice in the South," says the playwright, "and I was the most surprised kid in the world when they sat me right down at the table with them."

Before the brakeman went to bed, he asked Ted to be their adopted son. The runaway walked to downtown Cairo to think it over and made up his mind to accept when he saw posters announcing that Ringling Brothers Circus would soon play Cairo. But when he saw a brigade of hoboes swarming over a departing freight, he impulsively ran, took a grabiron, and got aboard a train to

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Theodore Ward.

St. Louis. There he worked in a barber shop, shining shoes, a vocation he was to employ time and again "till times got better." He entered grammar school, but child labor laws reduced his usefulness to the barber and he was fired.

Some Pullman porters, deadheading back to Chicago, put him in a drawing room and took him to the Toddlin' Town, the city which was to educate him, thwart him and give theater to his first play, *Big White Fog*. The boy found a sandlot ball game and fell to talking with a Negro fan. Ted's talk sounded mighty queer to his new acquaintance. In one of the books Ted had devoured before leaving Thibodaux he had been overcome by the beautiful English spoken by Mr. Micawber, and he had taken the grandiose speaker of *David Copperfield* for his model of fancy English. He had composed eloquent letters to his friends in the lofty Micawber style. The Chicago baseball fan unraveled the strange jargon of Mr. Micawber's small reincarnation: "He dug me right away," says the playwright. "When he trapped me into admitting that I didn't know where Comiskey Ball Park was located, he knew I wasn't from Chicago."

The man hauled him off to the home of a redoubtable leader of the South Side Negro community, Mrs. Ida B. Wells. There an even bigger surprise in Northern dining customs awaited him: Mrs. Wells was having a formal dinner party. Ted ate in the kitchen because he had not brought his tuxedo.

Mrs. Wells arranged for Ted to be taken into a YMCA, where the Boy's Secretary "put me on the right way," Ward says. He earned his keep by doing chores around the "Y" and continued going to school. Then he got a job with a jeweler in the Loop. The work consisted of delivering jewelry in a bag chained to his wrist, while an armed detective followed him. In Chicago he ate books. There were books everywhere. He kept up his addiction to Western story magazines, until one day he was struck by the fact that Negroes never carried the six-guns or did any of the shooting. He says, "I threw the magazine away in a flash. I never looked at one again." He was fifteen.

THEN began *wanderjahrs*. He went to the Coast. In Portland he was a bootblack in a barber shop. There he picked up some extra money by cleaning a cellar in a middle-class house. In the grotto he found Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf, and he got a flashback to magazine ads which said that you could get the world's culture in fifteen minutes a day by dallying in the Harvard Classics. He stretched out the cleaning job so he could get in at least thirty minutes a day and be twice as cultured. He read Descartes, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Aristophanes, Voltaire, Goethe, in great slow hunks. Goethe excited him. He "dug" the Greek dramatists right away. But philosophy addled his mind. "I didn't have the slightest preparation for reading philosophy," he says, "and I would read the same paragraph over and over. I thought I was stupid when I didn't get it."

In his teens he read Hamsun's *Hunger*, Jack London, *Paradise Lost*, Bunyon, *Madame Bovary*, everything. "I didn't know how to read," he says. "I read promiscuously. I never learned to seek out a man's intentions; I didn't know enough to size up what an author was trying to put over." He read *An American Tragedy* when it appeared in 1926. Dreiser's masterpiece profoundly moved him. "I understood that kid, Clyde Griffiths. I knew those religious parents of his. That was a memorable thing to me." He was in love with Joseph Conrad, with *Lord Jim* and *Youth*. When he read *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, he stopped as he had with the Western story magazines. "I realized that Conrad looked down on Negroes. That threw me off Conrad."

He went to Seattle and shined shoes. In a Chinese gambling house he won seventeen silver dollars in the lottery. He plunged it on the chuck-a-luck cage and won. He unloaded his silver for

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bills and cleaned up in blackjack. He went on to the crap table. When the dealer started refusing his bets on the green baize field, he walked out with $2,800.

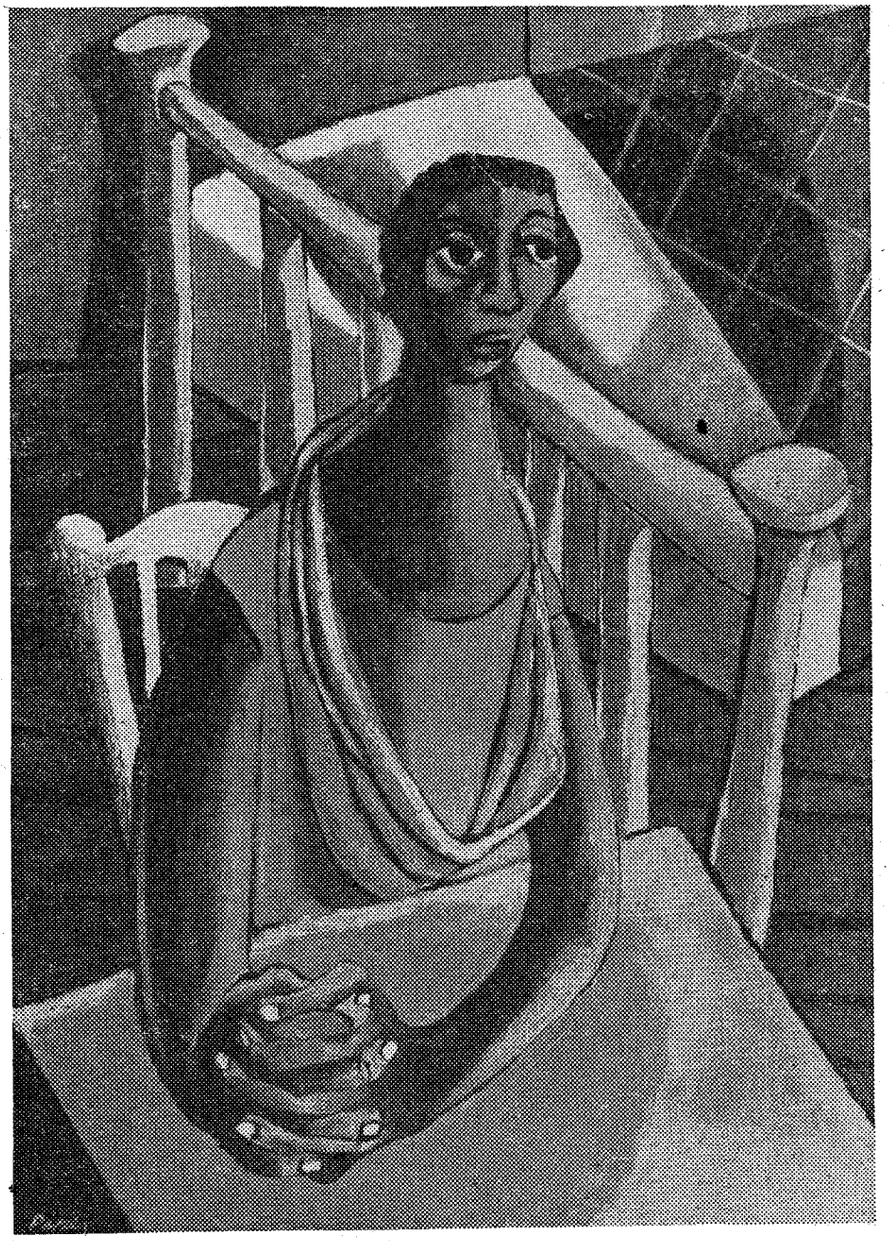
He went to Salt Lake City with his stake and bought a red textbook in a college bookstore. He would like to remember today the name of that book and its author; it was the freshman handbook in English grammar used at the University of Utah. He pored over his "Red Book," and in six months learned the grammar and usage of the English tongue. He loafed and read on his grubstake, and hung out at a shoeshine parlor whose proprietor was a vaunted high school football player who had been injured and could no longer play the game. "That man talked about race all the time," says Ward. "We talked race. He was a frantic type fellow."

One day they were discussing their people's lot in America and a customer came in. Ward was sitting on the customer's chair and his friend immediately began to shine his shoes. The customer submerged himself in a newspaper and waited. "He pretended to read his paper but I could see he was listening to our talk," says Ward. After the client had had his shine he said to Ward, "I am a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Come to see me." He gave Ward his card, which identified him as a mining journal correspondent. "I went to see him, just to see how I'd be treated," says Ward.

The meeting with the journalist, Gale Martin, led to friendships with a group of newspapermen and professors, including Louis Zucker, an English professor at the University of Utah. When Ted told his experience in the Chinese gambling house, Martin suggested that he write it as a short story. Ward went on hiking trips with his new friends into the encircling Wahsatch mountains. Around a campfire in Big Cottonwood Canyon one night Zucker reviewed Ted's progress as a writer and suggested that he apply for a Zona Gale Fellowship in Creative Writing at the University of Wisconsin. His grubstake ran out while he was waiting to hear about his application; he worked as a barber-shop porter and elevator man and sat in on one of Prof. Zucker's extension courses in writing. Then, in the fall of '31, he went to Madison as a Zona Gale Fellow. At the end of the school year the scholarship was finished but Miss Gale (Mrs. William L. Breese) renewed it personally after becoming interested in Ward's development.

He spent this year at Wisconsin learning theatrical reading. He had his own local radio show, reading verse and extracts from plays. When he left Wisconsin he went to Chicago. Through a friend in social work, he became a WPA recreational director for the Abraham Lincoln Center on the South Side. He took to directing one-act plays at the center, and when the Federal Theater was founded he joined its Negro unit under the director Charles De Shiem. His first play was written at this time, *Sick and Tiahd,* a one-act drama of a Southern Negro who resists the cheating of a cotton broker, comes home and barricades himself in the house to defend himself against the broker's lynch mob.

In 1937 he wrote his first full-length play, *Big White Fog,* which was produced by the Chicago Federal Theater in 1938 and two years later in New York by the Negro Playwrights Company at the Lincoln Theater in Harlem. *Big White Fog* deals with a Chicago Negro family over the decade 1922 to 1932, from the migratory years to the depression. The father, Victor Mason, is a zealous lieutenant of Marcus Garvey's movement for the return of American Negroes to a homeland in Africa. The family circle contains a grandmother who



"Empty Bed Blues," oil by Rose Piper. From her Rosenwald Fellowship series on Blues and Negro Folksong, showing at RoKo Gallery, New York, through November 1.

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looks back to the "good old days" in the South, a brother-in-law who believes in capitalist exploitation of his fellow-Negroes, a daughter who is gradually forced into prostitution by poverty, an uncle who has taken to the half world, and a son who is a Communist. The social compulsions of the Mason family destroy Victor Mason's stubborn and idealistic faith in Garveyism. *Big White Fog* is a social tragedy, almost Ibsenesque in its relentless development. It has obvious faults as dramaturgy and completely lacks commercial tricks. It has the distinction of being the only play in our dramatic literature which realistically deals with a present-day Negro family.

Big White Fog was the work of a maturing playwright who fully understood Negro life, but he still had something to learn of technique and of the politics of the theater. The play was produced in Chicago over the sniping of right-wing Negro leaders and the obstructions of censorship. Hallie Flanagan, national director of the Federal Theater, threw her personal weight into Chicago to see that it was produced. Chicago police censorship attempted to stop it. *Big White Fog* ran for ten weeks, was well received by its audiences, and made money. The play was not adequately publicized; after it closed Ward found thousands of unused *Big White Fog* posters in the basement of the theater.

The Chicago Federal Theater production of *The Swing Mikado* came to New York with Theodore Ward as a chorus boy. The Woodrum committee smashed the Federal Theater, *Swing Mikado* was sold to a commercial producer, and Ward became president of the Negro Playwrights Company in Harlem. The group tried to organize a people's theater on a commercial basis. Twenty-four thousand white New Yorkers went to Harlem to see its first production, *Big White Fog*. Only 1,500 Negroes saw it. "Our mistake," says Ward, "was the failure to realize that our theater had to have organized roots in the community. We failed to reach Harlem."

WARD wrote *Our Lan'* in 1941. It was a historical play because he wanted "to find out how far back in American history there was the clearest expression of the Negro's comprehension of what was necessary for his own salvation." He read Dubois' *Black Reconstruction*, James S. Allen, Herbert Aptheker, Elizabeth Lawson and other historians of the American Negro. With his clues in hand, he went to work on a research into government reports of the Reconstruction period. "It was clear that these people, emerging from slavery, grasped the reality of their time; they sharply understood the political and social situation."

The playwright could find no way of having *Our Lan'* produced in '41. He turned to writing for the war effort. *Deliver the Goods* was written for production at Greenwich House. It was the first play on a national defense theme staged in the US. In 1942 Ward went to Washington to offer his services to the Writers' War Board. He had an idea for a play on Frederick Douglass which he felt would help the morale of Negro troops. The Writers' War Board said he was too serious: soldiers wanted ribald material, they told him. Ward hung around Washington, shining shoes for his bread, trying for months to get his idea accepted. He had a series of schmoozes, known as conferences in Washington, and the authorities delivered their final opinion: bringing up the Civil War, they said, would antagonize the white South, and, by George, he wouldn't want the white South to pull out of the war, would he?

Ward left the busy capital and went up the hills and painted watercolors for a month. It cleared his mind. He went back to Chicago and opened a shoe-shine parlor with the idea of giving himself enough time to continue playwriting. It turned out that the business took all his time. He sold it and went to work as an inspector in the Maremont Automotive Products plant, which made bumpers, axles and tank components. There he was too busy to work on anything except notes for a labor play he has yet to write.

He tried to launch *Our Lan'* in Chicago, and encountered one of the strangest of his frustrations as a playwright. He found a theater and organized a company. The theater had been in use as a movie house; it had a monstrous structure built in the middle of the stage, a steel and tile air-conditioning and heating unit. The theater manager would not allow the structure to be removed, arguing that if the play failed, he probably could not replace his gadget due to wartime shortages. "He was a nice guy," says Ward, "and sincerely wanted to see my play done, but he couldn't part with his air-conditioning thing."

Ward came back to New York

FREEDOM TRAIN

WE HAVE broken the shackles of four million slaves. We have imposed upon them the privilege of fighting our battles, of dying in defense of freedom, of bearing their equal portion of taxes, but where have we given them the privilege of ever participating in the formation of the laws of the government of their native land? By what civil weapon have we enabled them to defend themselves against oppression and injustice? Call you this liberty? Call you this a Republic, where four millions are subjects, but not citizens? Then Persia with her kings and satraps was free; then Turkey is free! Their subjects had liberty of motion and of labor, but the laws were made without and against their will. . . . Think not I would slander my native land: I would reform it. Twenty years ago I denounced it as a despotism. Then twenty million white men enchained four million black men. I pronounce it no nearer a true republic now when twenty-five million of a privileged class exclude five million from all participation in the rights of government.—*Thaddeus Stevens*, Jan. 3, 1867.

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early in 1945 and worked for a while writing scripts for OWI overseas broadcasts, but Congress dumped the OWI as it had massacred the Federal Theater. The playwright took to selling a telephone index gadget known as the Tel-Easy. Then the Theater Guild put him back in his profession with a $500 grant for a twenty-week seminar in playwrighting.

He helped organize Associated Playwrights with a group of seven anti-fascist writers: Edmund B. Hennefeld, Nicholas J. Biel, Harry Granick, Haig Monoogian, Samuel Kaiser, Don Huddleston and Daniel Rudsten. Their aims are to work together in a theatrical laboratory, with the benefit of mutual criticism from the inception of the idea until a writer's work is ready for the stage. Edward Mitchell, director of the 400-seat Henry Street Playhouse at the corner of Grand and Pitt Streets, offered to produce three of their plays in the semi-professional repertory season of the famous settlement house. Last year the Broadway critics went down there to see *Our Lan'*, Hennefeld's *Deputy of Paris* and Biel's *Winners and Losers*.

"OUR LAN'" drew such laudatory notices that Ward was soon being courted by the Broadway producers. Eddie Dowling brought the play to Broadway the last week in September with the Henry Street cast led by William Veasey and Muriel Smith, and Julie Haydon in a small part as a Yankee schoolmistress. John Chapman and George Jean Nathan led the minority of favorable reviewers, while a strange thing happened to most of the other critics who had seen the play both on Henry Street and at the Royale. The same critics who had liked it downtown liked it less uptown. Brooks Atkinson on Grand Street said, "If the Associated Playwrights never do anything else, they will deserve a speck of glory for producing *Our Lan'* . . . it is one of the best of the Gotham season in general." Brooks Atkinson on West 45th Street said, "By coming uptown from Grand Street, Theodore Ward's *Our Lan'* has acquired theatrical dimensions and lost simplicity."

This sniffy note characterized several other reviews, as though the trip from the East Broadway Station of the Sixth Avenue subway to the 42nd Street Station had magically transformed *Our Lan'* into something else.

In a theatrical interlude dominated by suppurating piffle, *Our Lan'* is in the interrupted tradition of social drama. The play does not belong to the theater of thought control. *Variety* recently reported that a new script on Palestine has been frowned upon by the State Department. When Representative Rankin's touts get around to seeing *Our Lan'* we may expect hydrophobic emanations from the Thought Police and *demarches* from the State Department. *Our Lan'* is a play of resistance, in key with the present defensive period of American liberty. It will hearten that resistance.

One of the cutest critical angles was offered by a daily reviewer who objected to the lack of exhuberance when settlers in the play get the news that the Civil War is over. This scene seemed to me to reflect uncannily the behavior of Londoners on V-E Day and of Parisians on V-J Day. The critic seemed to think that liberated people get drunk and climb lampposts. He was mistaking liberation for the frustrated exhibitionism which occurs thousands of miles from wars when they end. In his need for the celebration cliche this critic epitomized the other-worldliness of the New York reviewers when faced with human life portrayed on the stage. They understand *Allegro* better: that's art.

Ted is a rabid partisan of the Brooklyn Dodgers and plays hookey from his work occasionally to sit in the bleachers at Ebbet's Field. He took the Brooklyn defeat in the World's Series with greater evidence of pain than he showed toward his many bitter experiences in the theater. He has no considerable hobbies. The watercolor therapy he tried after the Washington rebuff was purely medicinal. "It's too damn absorbing," he says. "If I started to paint again, I wouldn't do anything else. There are too many good painters for me to try to horn in."

His brother MacNeil is a surgeon in Austin, Texas, where he settled after graduating from Howard University in the conviction that Negro doctors were needed most in the South. He came to New York for the opening of *Our Lan'*. Several other brothers are Pullman porters and one is the assistant to an interior decorator in Chicago.

One of his sisters is a school teacher, another operates a dry-cleaning plant.

Chekhov is Ward's favorite playwright—next to Shakespeare. Among the contemporaries he enthuses over Lillian Hellman. He likes the Irish playwrights. "They didn't seem to be ashamed of the people," he says. He mentioned *Stevedore*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *Awake and Sing* and *Deep Are the Roots* as leading modern plays.

"I haven't seen very much of the stage," he says. "I never had the money to go."

Waitin' for that train . . .

New Orleans.

Do you know enough to vote? If you were a Negro citizen of Iberville parish (county), the registrar of voters would give you a test to determine that question. You would fail.

On August 27 four affidavits were submitted to the US Attorney by Daniel E. Byrd, state leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which charged that unfair tactics were used to deny registration to Negro applicants. Two of the affiants who were declared ineligible to vote in the coming gubernatorial election are veterans of World War II.

Here are the questions and answers in one test which resulted in the applicant's failure to qualify:

Q. Who is your Congressman?

A. Morrison.

Q. Who is lieutenant governor?

A. I do not know.

Q. Do you know anything about the Constitution of the United States?

A. Yes.

Q. Who is the police jury?

A. I do not know.

Q. Who is the governor of this state?

A. Jimmie Davis.

Q. Do you know the constitution of this parish?

A. No.

Q. Do you know the state assessor?

A. No.

Q. Who is President of the United States?

A. Harry S. Truman.

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LONDON LETTER

by Derek Kartun

"Sticks and Stones . . ."

London (by mail).

THE English language is not the least of the things which are undergoing profound upheaval in the current crisis here. Our presence in the economic doghouse has given us a whole range of fascinating new words and phrases.

In the days when the dollar difficulties were first becoming apparent and cabinet ministers were anxious to get the public into the mood to take whatever was coming to them, Mr. Herbert Morrison in particular started to make his own contributions to current folksay. He did this chiefly by virtue of the fact that he has as personal publicity agent one of the top advertising men in the country—a man so pushing on Mr. Morrison's behalf that he used to get his chief into repeated difficulties with Winston Churchill during the coalition days of the war. There was a time when this bright youngster succeeded in implanting in the public mind the conception that a Just War and Herbert Morrison were synonymous terms. Churchill took a dim view of this achievement because he had already cornered the parallel himself.

Lately Mr. Morrison, Lord President of the Council, has been on safer ground. He has given us Work or Want, Go to It, Close the Gap, Drop Our Umbrellas and Take to the Water and Swim (rather obscure, this one), Living on Tick, and quite a few others. Mr. Dalton, our dome-headed and patrician Chancellor of the Exchequer, once added to the collection his exquisite "I Have a Song in My Heart." But nobody mentions that nowadays.

Then we have been told by various other people of greater or less importance to Put Our Cards on the Table, Keep Left, Face the Future and almost anything else that comes into the heads of politicians confused and dismayed by the stubborn refusal of Britain's trade to balance itself.

Having exhausted for the time being the possibilities of invention offered by the dollar crisis, the high-powered public relations experts in our government departments have turned to problems of internal organization. And they have delved deep into a quaint zoological world reminiscent of Edward Lear's *Dong With the Luminous Nose*. The new terms they have discovered are Spiv, Drone, Eel and Butterfly.

There is a whole political philosophy wrapped up in this obscure new ministerial vocabulary. It bears looking into by people who may have an uncomfortable feeling, as many of us in Britain have, that they are perhaps regarded by their neighbors as a most ostentatious type of Spiv (or Drone) without themselves being in the least aware of that serious fact. It is just about possible, for the benefit of Americans who will be confused by all this, to give a brief glossary.

Spiv: Someone who wears an American tie in London's West End. Generally also found wearing an indifferent imitation of an American shirt and an American-style hat (ridiculous brim)—the whole outfit giving the impression that he is thinking about the profusion of New York when he should be concentrating on the scarcity of London. The government is making a very great fuss indeed about its intention of getting him to do an honest day's work. There is a feminine gender known as "spivette" who tries constantly and very hard to look like Lizabeth Scott.

Drone: A much fatter type with less padding in his shoulders and generally more money than he rightly knows what to do with. Not necessarily addicted to American styles. In this category can be found most company directors, investors, market speculators, financiers, bookmakers, black market operators and touts of various kinds. The government has given no indication that these people are to be made to work and it is widely believed that the fuss about the Spivs is designed to obscure the issue of the Drones.

Eel: Variety of lesser Drone who does not work for his living, waxes furious over his inability to visit the French Riviera, and buys all his gasoline in the black market. Often less wealthy than the full-grown Drone.

Butterfly: Whimsical version of the Drone for use of women's magazines, popular weeklies and polite tea-parties.

HARDLY a day goes by now without a liberal display of the new zoology across the front pages of the national press. Articles are being written by people claiming to be genuine Spivs themselves. Letters are published from people obviously anxious to hide the fact that they and their friends are all well-formed Drones. Not a political speech in weeks

"POINT OF ORDER!"
A scene at the recent convention of the National Maritime Union in New York, drawn by Forrest Wilson. The seaman-artist was a delegate from the "MS Cape Alava."

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has been made without an aside on these creatures. And the government appears pleased enough to see the nation (or that part of it which does not come within the category) chasing off after the Spivs of Piccadilly Circus (*vide* Broadway) when we would all be more usefully employed hunting the Drones of Mayfair (*vide* Sutton Place).

I do not know the origin of the word Spiv and neither, I fancy, does anyone else. But everyone does know that the reason for our chronic difficulties—lack of manpower, low productivity, unplanned industry — does not reside with them. Everybody in England would obviously be happy to put the wastrels to work. But they would be a lot happier and a lot more usefully employed in examining the Drones —their sources of income, their wasteful and luxurious living in the midst of shortages, their apparent reluctance to do any real work at a time when work and planning alone can save Britain.

The Spiv-Drone controversy is a fair measure of the weakness of the Labor government in tackling the crisis. For let us face the fact that while they are introducing measures to direct the labor and control the wages of the working people, of the poor, they have shown themselves totally unwilling to do the same thing to the rich. This piecemeal and uneven distribution of national sacrifices has not gone unnoticed in the country. Against such a background the recent miners' strike becomes a lot easier to understand.

Roger Bacon's Oxford or the Cuckoos'? And Whose World?

Rain haunted, bell haunted, bird haunted
(thoroughly poofed on by pigeons)
is that Oxford? dear old Oxford,
famous rather for her rebels (Roger Bacon):
infamous for her crippling of Lewis Carroll,
looking glass mind (poofed on by cuckoo professors)
in maidenly waste of body.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, Churchill, to you;
and to Spellman, too.

I have never been to the skunk works over that hill,
so really I know nothing about them; my word goes for
nothing
when I say I dislike them, and what they distill.
("Shut up, you colonial, you; shut your nasty windows!"
from the Tory seats in the house this patriotic cry
goes up; and the court cards shuffle and reshuffle.)
For really, it is only surmise in an Ameddican
that there is a skunk works over that bonnie hill;
but there are rumors reach us, there's a certain air
about the dear old boys who come from there,
wafting abroad
as they take our tea with our diplomatic Jays;
and take our conscience too (but this is hush;
so very hush and shush and "Close your mush,
you nasty you"). My word, where have all the skunks gone
to,
as Milton or the Bible would have said it ("Those nasty
them,
with prepositions last; unGreek!")
Draw no conclusions; reason's in bad taste
on the skunk works' side of the hill.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, Churchill, to you;
and to Spellman, too: now to Hoover, pooh pooh.

The nicest people come from there, yes indeed,
they come fast, choking and tearful;
too shy to give us an earful.

But there are rumors, there's surmise
over the ruddy noses, the weeping eyes;
or worse, the murdered sense of smell
(olfactory, dear old bores) and crooned over consciences,
lulled to deep sleep among the rendering stenches
of world diplomacy, sans ache, sans bother,
by the opiate dispensers: or sent down, to Father;
or to some nearer, dearer old boy (than God) in an odd
sort of bonnet,
a tea cosy with jeeves and dithers stitched upon it
in random embroidery.

Oh what a guy;
hang him up high by his old school tie
and there let him dry.

— ELEANOR MABRY.

Three Songs of Harvest

Worker, your leaders I have seen
When all humanity seemed beautiful,
A father enfolding his children in his arms,
The child submerged from day in Sleep's slow lull,
A fragile girl whose arms seemed scarcely full
Bearing her brother like the day's bright load
Borne on the hayrick when all the day seemed bountiful.

Worker, your leaders I have seen
When on the breast of the fresh come day our fields
Lay fair and to our hungry lips brought milk
As children tip their lips and eyes to the sun's
Light sharp as hunger on their faces
Though feel their bellies pinch as orchards sway
And harvest-laden barns and smoke lofts creak.

Worker, your leaders I have seen
When seed took earth and burst upon the ground,
The summer thunder shook the listening grain
On whispering harvests of the wind
And on the breast of the fresh come day our fields
Lay fair, though by their wealth my brother starved.

PAUL B. NEWMAN.

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review and comment

ROLL OF HONOR

From the African Company to "Our Lan'." What Negro artists have done for America's stage.

By FREDI WASHINGTON

THE NEGRO IN THE AMERICAN THEATER, *by Edith J. R. Isaacs. Theater Arts.* $3.50.

WITH authority born of her long editorship of *Theater Arts Magazine*, Mrs. Isaacs has compiled the chronological record of Negro talents and achievements in the theater with dignity, sympathy and a keen understanding. This book by no means contains the full record of accomplishments of Negroes in the theater, but the outline is sharp and only remains to be filled in by authors of future books on the Negro's contribution to American culture.

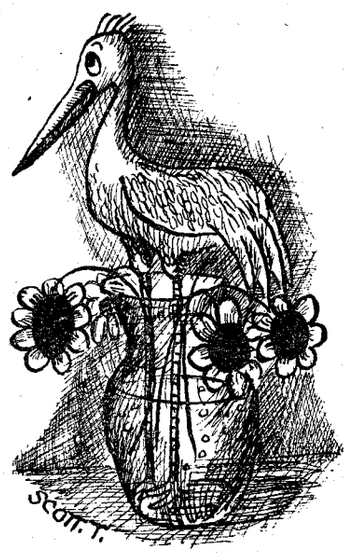
The saga of the Negro in the theater, as told by the author, spans the period from 1821—when New York had its short-lived repertory Negro group, the African Company, which starred James Hewlett in Shakespearean roles—to Negro playwright Ted Ward's current Broadway production, *Our Lan'*, which features Muriel Smith and William Veasey.

This saga is a fascinating one, but is not without its somber aspects—reflecting the Negro's struggle for freedom and for citizenship. And Mrs. Isaacs has not failed to recognize the struggle of the Negro actor to hurdle the second-class-citizenship stigma, before he was able to begin to establish himself as an artist.

To those of us in the theater who have had to wait five and six years between plays, the progress has seemed mighty slow and tedious; but despite our impatience and frustration an evolution, perhaps unrealized, has been taking place in the theater over a long period. The seeds of this evolution were planted when Bert Williams in 1910 left the all-Negro musical field to join the *Follies* as the first Negro to be starred in an all-white show on Broadway. Since that time there have been many plays and musical shows produced with racially mixed casts which have presented the Negro as an actor rather than as a stereotyped symbol. This is borne out by some of the more recent plays, such as *Deep Are the Roots*, *The Ice Man Cometh*, *Othello* with Paul Robeson in the title role, *On Whitman Avenue*, *Native Son* and *Jeb*.

Nor have the musical shows lagged in their acceptance of the Negro as a full-fledged artist, as is evidenced by such musicals as *On the Town*, *Bloomer Girl*, *Street Scene*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *Beggar's Holiday*, *Call Me Mister* and several others which have woven actors of darker hue into the story theme on the basis of their talents rather than their color.

The Federal Theater under the old WPA, the little theater groups and some playwrights come in for their share of credit for much of the development of the Negro actor. They effected a change in the attitude of the producer, director and theater-going public toward Negro themes. Mrs. Isaacs lauds, and rightly so, the Federal Theater as having given the Negro actor, playwright and technician the greatest opportunity he has yet received in this country to prove his worth as an artist. She points to productions such as *One-Third of a Nation*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Macbeth*, *Androcles and the Lion*.



Don't get the idea that Mrs. Isaacs naively believes the Negro actor has altogether attained his rightful place in the theater, or that the Negro playwright has more than scratched the surface of his own talents. What she does believe, however, and points out clearly, is that despite the wider opportunities for better roles apparently open to the Negro actor he faces the same economic obstacles as the white actor—mainly a lack of good plays produced in any one season and the present high production costs. The author believes further that professional training would do much to mitigate some of the obstacles faced by Negroes in their efforts to achieve success on the Broadway stage.

In her summation she says: "Many Negro members of Equity have today about the same wretched percentage of opportunity to earn a living that other actors have; which is, on the average, the chance of a few weeks' work a year. That is not a happy prospect, to be sure, but at least it is not a problem of race, but of the unsound basis on which our theater is organized. It does not alter the fact that, among the Negro actors who have made good, those that were trained have had the best results, and that they got their training before they met the tough professional competition of Broadway."

For theater people and others interested in American culture, particularly the theater, *The Negro in the American Theater* can be regarded as a warm living work. Mrs. Isaacs' characters, personalities and plays, with many of which we are familiar, once again parade through our mind's eye as something of which to be proud.

The book is a recounting of a long and painful beginning toward a truly democratic theater in which all of the people might share, regardless of race, color or creed. It is to be hoped that Mrs. Isaacs will continue her interest in the struggle for equality of oppor-

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tunity in the American theater, and in future works further record the Negro's struggle and accomplishments.

He Toddled Along

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE'S AMERICA, *by Walter Johnson. Holt.* $5.

THIS volume presents—ensconced in generally platitudinous and superficial editorializing—the deeply significant story of William Allen White, the jolly, paunchy Middle-Western liberal front for the Republican Party from the days of Populism to those of the Second World War.

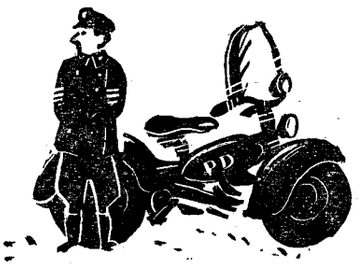
Boosted into national prominence because of a pungent pen wielded against the "menace" of Populism, he mellowed in later years. From the deliberately retained vantage point of Emporia, Kansas, he resisted lucrative offers "to dwell," as he put it, "in the tents of the wicked as a court jester." However this was, essentially, his self-imposed task.

There were saving graces; there were depths he would not descend to. He despised the Ku Klux Klan, fought the dangerous fascist Winrod, and refused to sell himself to Hearst—to whom he referred, privately, as "a rattlesnake crossed with the smallpox" and as "the most vicious influence in American life."

Still he was convinced that the wealthy were "endowed by God" to rule, though there were moments of doubts and soul-searchings, as when he visited Palm Beach in 1929 and described it—privately, again—as "just a great big stinking bawdy house of the rich." But this evoked nothing more militant or profound than: "It's all a queer mess."

He knew that Charles Curtis was "without an ideal and without any breadth of view," but he helped make him a Senator and a Vice-President. He knew that Morgan's partner, George W. Perkins, was in charge of financing Theodore Roosevelt's so-called Progressive Party in 1912 (to keep the party "practical," as Roosevelt put it) but he nominated the same Perkins for chairman of that party's executive committee, hastening its vitiation and death. He knew that Warren G. Harding was "stupid," if not "crooked." He saw Harry Sinclair personally interrogate and pass on the final choice for the Republican presidential nomination in 1920, regarded Harding's candidacy "as a menace to the Republic," and knew that his party was "married to big business." Yet when Harding was in office he wrote —publicly—that he would "make one of our great Presidents," and found his administration "sweetly progressive." But—privately—he declared: "If ever there was a man who was a he-harlot, it was this same Warren G. Harding."

He knew Lowden to be "a cream separator," Dawes "a back-firing tractor," and Hoover "an adding machine," yet he worked for them all. Though the despised Hearst created the Landon boom of 1936, he worked



for Landon, too, and in between billing him as a down-to-earth Kansas farmer he went to New York wheedling financial support from Thomas Lamont and Winthrop Aldrich of Chase National.

In his last years (he died in January, 1944) the Jekyll-Hyde role continued. Privately, warnings went out that Patterson of the New York *Daily News*, McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune* and Merwin K. Hart, the financier, loathed democracy. He even saw that "the Republican Party may be the center of a fascist movement," yet he opposed Roosevelt in 1936 and 1940, and was writing love letters to Dewey just before his death.

"I was torn," White wrote, during the Harding campaign, "as I often am in politics, between the desire to jump in the fiery furnace as a martyr, and the instinct to save my hide and go along on the broad way that leadeth to destruction. In the end I toddled along."

The small-town newspaper owner, the moderate millionaire, sees a choice only between quick and slow destruction, and naturally chooses the last. Such are the alternatives these days for one who believes in the immortality of "free enterprise" and the practicality of reforming the "malefactors of wealth." No career offers more damning evidence of the futility, and viciousness, of such a belief than that of the amiable Mr. White of Kansas.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

The Senator Is Haunted

THE RING AND THE CROSS, *by Robert Rylee. Knopf.* $3.

MR. RYLEE's story opens with the wartime journey of a Texas Senator to his home city, Congreave (read Houston), and ends with the same gentleman returning to Washington a somewhat sadder, more entrenched, more reactionary character. Not many days intervene between his coming and going, but enough to rid Senator Denbow of the specter of opposition for office in the person of Vaiden MacEachern.

Behind Denbow stand a number of ominous figures—politicos, financiers, former national heroes—all of them shown to be far stronger than Denbow himself, who for all his wealth and power is their pawn. Behind Vaiden stand the people who work in the shipyard in which a good part of the story takes place—Negroes, Mexicans, unionists—and good people everywhere. Believing the existing political parties to be defunct, Vaiden intends organizing a third party.

There are other stories here, too, but I feel that this is one of those few books that don't need the adornment of romanticism to help the reader along in political paths. The writing is vigorous and deft, and Mr. Rylee could have, for my taste, omitted the love angles—they just don't sit right.

There are weaknesses in structure that detract from much of the good writing, and there are political formulations that belie some of his political observations. The technique of flash-back is used far too often. One wishes rather that Mr. Rylee had begun at the beginning and hewed forward. There are also a number of awkward constructions whose only excuse seems to be the author's habit of turning a well-rounded phrase into a twisted one.

Mr. Rylee's observations of Texas life (of Southern life, really) are valid and important. Poll tax, Ku Klux Klan, race hatreds, cheap labor, anti-unionism, AFL backwardness, fascism and other aspects of our national life are taken for a well-earned ride. But against them he gives us little more than a philosophy for doing good. Vaiden MacEachern may want to

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change "this sorry state of things entire," but beyond mention of those who would support him we never meet the people who would ring the doorbells, vote, nominate or say a kind word for him. Vaiden has faith in the people, but we never get to know who they are. The occasional yardworkers who appear are characterized as fellows whose eyes light up in Vaiden's presence. He is just too benevolent.

The author's comments on national life, on the rule of the South by Wall Street (Senator Denbow is, in the last analysis, a puppet of Wall Street), on the fascist-mindedness of our ruling class, are well taken. He proceeds, however, to blame President Roosevelt for their strength, and by implication includes him among the men who fear the extension of democracy anywhere. Roosevelt's fight against the poll tax is explained away purely on the grounds of "vote-getting." Also ignored are the very positive contributions in the field of labor rights and social security made under FDR.

On the whole, though, Mr. Rylee strikes one as a forceful talent on the side of progress. He makes up in vigor and authenticity what he lacks in some areas of political sagacity. He is definitely not the kind of writer to whom the thought-control salesmen will take kindly. Or vice versa.

DAVID ALMAN.

Brave Old World

ONE TWO THREE . . . INFINITY: Facts and Speculations of Science, *by George Gamow. Viking.* $4.75.

PROFESSOR GAMOW has attempted a popular exposition and synthesis of our knowledge in the basic physical sciences. He makes no concession to loose and easy explanations at the expense of adequate exposition. Even more, he is free of the shallow idealism and religious bias that mar so much of Eddington and Jean's work in the same genre.

Devoting most of his attention to Einsteinian relativity, quantum mechanics and nuclear physics, Professor Gamow tries, wherever possible, to relate these to mathematics, chemistry and biology, to which he also devotes several sections of his book. He shows us how the non-Euclidean geometrics are employed in relativity theories of time and space, and the vital roles that chemistry and physics play in biology and astronomy.

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In this 30,000-word book Joseph McCabe charges that the Encyclopedia Britannica has been seriously distorted through the influence of the Roman Catholic Church until it is no longer a reliable, honest source of knowledge. Mr. McCabe also charges that the Church, through its wealth and numbers, has obtain a pernicious influence on publications, the press, the radio and to an increasing extent on education and even the movies.

The publishers believe that McCabe's investigation will help open the eyes of the American public to these conditions. He charges, with what he considers definite evidence, that the Church is using its enormous wealth and voting power to poison the wells of truth and to conceal from the public the facts of history which are at variance with the claims it advances today. The publishers consider that anyone who examines McCabe's evidence will agree that the 14th edition of the Britannica has been used by the Catholic hierarchy for the purposes of propaganda and that the University of Chicago should not sponsor such a work.

"THE LIES AND FALLACIES OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA" costs 50c per copy prepaid. Mail orders to:

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tions of the book is the discussion on cosmogony, the origin of the solar system. The old nebular hypotheses of Kant and Laplace are revived, with evidence of as late as 1943 presented to establish that the solar system was not formed out of the debris of a collision between our sun and another star, as had been previously supposed, but rather from original terrestrial material imbedded in a huge rotating solar envelope that surrounded the sun. The masses of planetary material grew larger from collision with smaller dust particles, while the gaseous part of the solar envelope dissipated gradually into interstellar space, where traces of it may still be seen as the faint luminosity known as Zodiacal Light. Zodiacal Light has the same chemical composition as the sun and the stars—largely hydrogen and helium—while the most common chemicals of the earth form only about one percent of the elements found in the sun. Thus, the new theory derives most of its support from the recent chemical analyses of the heavenly bodies. But the most startling consequence of the theory is the conclusion that "the formation of the planetary system was not an exceptional event, but one that must have taken place in the formation of practically all the stars"; so that "there must be millions of planets within our galaxy alone, the physical conditions on which are almost identical with those on our earth. And it would be at least strange if life —even in its highest forms—had failed to develop in these 'inhabitable' worlds."

Professor Gamow's book is not always easy reading. What you get out of it will depend in large measure on the background you can bring to it. But the book has something to offer to every intelligent reader, no matter how meager his knowledge of science may be. And in an age when the fruits of physical science have become a major political issue, progressive people everywhere would do well to apprise themselves of some of the basic facts involved.

JACK SHEPARD.

Books Received

MRS. EGG AND OTHER AMERICANS, *by Thomas Beer. Knopf.* $5. There were two Thomas Beers: the author of *The Mauve Decade, Stephen Crane, The Fair Rewards* and *Sandoval;* and the scribe of innumerable short stories for the *Satevepost.* In his introduction to the first volume of the collected tales, Wilson Follett tries hard to persuade us that the gap between the two Beers was not as great as we were inclined to think. The reader can judge for himself. In any case, whoever liked the stories when they first appeared will still find them amusing.

THOMAS WOLFE: SHORT STORIES. *Penguin.* 25¢.

SO BIG, *by Edna Ferber. Penguin.* 25¢.

YOUNG LONIGAN, *by James T. Farrell. Penguin.* 25¢. The first of the *Studs Lonigan* novels.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MODERN ARCHITECTURE, *by Elizabeth Mock and J. M. Richards. Pelican.* 35¢. An excellent account of the development of modern architecture. Illustrated with the works of leading designers and builders.

THE MARSHALL FIELDS, *by John Tebbel. Dutton.* $3.75. The history of the Marshall Field family, from the department store merchant who left a $150,000,000 fortune to the publisher of *PM* and the Chicago *Sun.* An interesting study by the author of *An American Dynasty,* which dealt with the McCormick, Medill and Patterson families.

BEFORE THE DELUGE, *by Mark Aldanov. Scribners.* $3.50. One of the omnibus type of historical novels, with everything from soup to nuts. It deals first with Russia and secondly with all Europe between the years 1874 to 1881. The author is a talented and disillusioned white Russian conservative, unwilling to draw the conclusions he must from the events he describes. Alternating with the narrative are passages setting forth Aldanov's philosophy of history, the essence of which is that history is meaningless since chance rules the course of events.

GANDHI AND STALIN, *by Louis Fischer. Harper.* $2.50. This book could only have been written to make money. It is aimed at people who like history in the form of anecdotes and analysis with exclamation points. Incidentally, it might be interesting for a reader to compare one of Louis Fischer's earliest books, *The Soviets in World Affairs,* with the present claptrap, to see what can happen to a man who throws principle to the winds.

STATES AND MORALS, *by T. D. Weldon. Whittlesey House.* $3. An attempt to reduce international problems and conflicts of interest to ideological terms. It combines cleverness and naivete in a fashion possible only to a fellow at Oxford.

AMERICA'S ECONOMIC SUPREMACY, *by Brooks Adams. Harper.* $2.50. A reprint of a book which, in 1900, "predicted" the rivalry of Russia and America for world supremacy. A frank statement of imperialist aims, it is revived today with an introduction by Marquis W. Childs, in which the imperialism is coated with a high moral tone for a wider audience.

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sights and sounds

WIT AND WISDOM

The cream of intellectual comedy. Maurice Evans presents Shaw's "Man and Superman."

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

THERE may have been wittier playwrights than Shaw, and some more profoundly philosophic. None, however, has been witty and philosophical, simultaneously, on such a high level; and in none has wit and wisdom functioned so efficiently as dramatic means.

Of this the production of *Man and Superman* put on by Maurice Evans and his company at the Alvin provides a superb example. Its wit bubbles like a perennial spring, and its wisdom is as generous. This wisdom is drawn from an explicitly Marxist source: the hero, John Tanner, is a Socialist. Where the wisdom is familiar one realizes, with a start, how much of the ideas that have become part of the contemporary mind have a Shavian origin. It is almost like recognizing quotations at a Shakespearean performance. And always the witty turn, the brilliant insight, serves to forward an absorbing and inventive plot.

Both of the chief characters of *Man and Superman* may be said to personify the intelligence. John Tanner, the Socialist, symbolizes the intelligence in its task of extending man's understanding and, thereby, mastery over nature and over the structures of society. Ann Whitefield symbolizes the intelligence in its use of available human material for preserving and continuing the species.

For this end Ann uses anything and anybody—father, alive and dead; mother, willing or unwilling; sister, lover, dearest friend; love, paternal sentiment, chivalrous feelings, prejudices, vanities—every sensitive point at which a desired reaction can be stimulated. Much of Ann's operations are at the subconscious level. But this is deliberate: at that level she can strike, as it were, from ambush. And at that level she is safe from consequences. For there the tracks of responsibility disappear like footprints in a swamp.

Tanner, who understands so much, does not understand this wisdom. He is no match for it. He has no guards against its nerve-swift manipulation of the emotions. He knows to what end this wisdom is used, but its processes are too intimate for his generalizing mind. He can only pay his tribute to its power by identifying it as the "life force."

It is mainly from the conflict of these two intelligences that the play gets its dramatic tension. The victory appears to be Ann's. Seemingly unrelated acts prove to be steps in a continuous and calculated pursuit. The pursuer gets her quarry; Ann captures her John. But the conquest is, at the same time, her own willing surrender. In their union the mind completes itself. Its extensive and intensive forces are joined together. That is why the ending of the play is so curiously joyous, such a celebration of fulfillment. One leaves the play contented and cheered.

Accompanying the Ann-John conflict is another, the conflict of both against stupidity, inertia, ignorance, prejudice and privilege and its greeds that blight, deform and frustrate human life. This may be said to be the universal theme of all of Shaw's plays, each of which projects new personifications of reason and unreason in a new field of their infinite battleground.

Ann's conflict takes immediate practical forms. She spies out stupidities and follies and makes quick and deft use of them, in acts that are a richly ironic commentary upon them. Some of the most delightful moments of the play come when Ann plays upon the juvenile chivalry of a suitor and the paternal urges of her senile guardian. Tanner's conflict is with the institutionalized forms of stupidity and injustice. A number of Shaw's most penetrating observations are voiced in Tanner's lines.

Taken as figures of reality the characters in *Man and Superman* veer off from the plausible. Tanner is more continuously brilliant and articulate than one could be and more candid than one dare be, in life; and Ann is more immediately perceptive and more unerring than the most intuitive woman alive. And the foil characters, the fuddy-duddy guardian, the infantile lover, the millionaire still shuddering over his childhood poverty, are more perfect stooges for them than the real world could have provided.

Yet there is no violation of artistic reality. Shaw does what the theater artist must do who has only a few square feet of space and two hours, more or less, to contain his presentation of life. He highlights and he intensifies. In Shaw we get intelligence magnified. The process is analogous to the purposeful distortion used by great painters and sculptors—Michelangelo's exaggerated muscle masses, Rembrandt's accentuated light and shade, El Greco's deliberate imbalance.

The test of its effectiveness is the fact that the distortion never seems to be noticed by the audience. It never has occurred to me as auditor. It is only in the toil of critical analysis that it comes into focus. In that respect too —that the magnifications are all in scale and never intrude—Shaw is again the master.

The production is excellent. Mr. Evans as Tanner was, perhaps, overdeclamatory, but this had the advantage of rendering the brilliant lines with clarity and force. Fine performances were turned in by Malcolm Keene as Roebuck Ramsden, the old guardian, and Frances Rowe as Ann. And additional honors are due to Mr. Evans for his fine direction.

"Dear Judas"

WHILE *Dear Judas* dwells sufficiently on the role of Christ as a revolutionist to have agitated the

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Catholic hierarchy it negates that feat by its mysticism and by that obsession with violence that luridly streaks through all of Jeffers' poetry. To motivate the Judas betrayal not on security and the thirty pieces of silver but on a dread-of-and-yearning-for-violence complex is as false to psychology as to history. It is to substitute the rationalization for the reason. The 'revolutionist' Christ is hardly less pathological. His attitude toward the people has a sickly arrogance and hostility.

Jeffers' predatory hawk, his most characteristic poetic symbol, is allowed a flight over the Garden of Gethsemane as well. Violence, the play tells us, broods over the mind of Christ. Such other philosophy as manages to come through the confused lines is fatalistic. Everything, we are told, is predestined. Man is born into a trap in which he suffers an assigned doom.

There is nothing in the poetry to offset this cloudy and neurotic thinking. Certainly there is no drama in it. It is mainly descriptive; and even in its descriptions it tends to the abstract and the symbolic. From such poetry drama cannot be made, and Mr. Michael Myerburg, who was responsible for the adaptation, as well as the production, showed little judgment in the attempt—though he showed commendable scruple in not violating such qualities as the Jeffers' poetry has.

To substitute for the lacks in drama Mr. Myerburg used a choir to sing Bach chorales and a group of dancers to mime the action and emotions announced in the rhetorical lines. He costumed the dancers in dripping gray rags and in masks that appeared to have been cut out of tree bark. The dance figures were only too well suited to this garb. Perhaps it was the choreographer's intention to express pain. If so that intention was fulfilled literally: there have been few occasions where dancing was more painful to watch. As for the Bach chorales, if one shut one's eyes and forgot Mr. Jeffers, they could be enjoyed.

The acting was as good as such lines and such stage business permitted. Mr. Ferdi Hoffman as the Carpenter, Margaret Wycherly as the Woman and Harry Irvine as Lazarus did all that was possible to give the lines intelligibility and keep them from sounding like ranting. The best performance was that of Judas, whose lines were the clearest, to begin with, and who thoroughly became the conscience-haunted man he was supposed to be.

Broadway, these years, has seen all too little experimental theater. It is a pity that this season's first effort should have been so wasted.

ART: AN ORGANIZER TURNED PAINTER

THERE seems to be general agreement, at least on the Left, that what ails art these days is its remoteness from the people. Not only is a good deal of contemporary art esoteric, but even when it is not it never seems to get to the masses of the public. Among those who would like to see the natural social connection between the artist and his audience reestablished, there is a good deal of wishful and, to date, fruitless dreaming about "getting the unions to back art." Unfortunately, in most cases these same unions are so beset by economic and organizational problems that they fail to face the task of the educational and cultural development of their memberships. No amount of rationalization will change the fact that the labor unions of America have almost unanimously failed to fulfill this duty toward their members. And it is a failure which may have serious consequences.

It is, therefore, something of an occasion to find labor unions sponsoring an exhibition of paintings within their own precincts. Paintings by Ralph Fasanella recently hung in the recreation room of Local 65 of the Wholesale and Warehouse Workers Union-CIO, and now can be seen at the headquarters of Local 6 of the Hotel and Club Employes Union-AFL, at 305 W. 44 St.

Ralph Fasanella is himself a worker, a former UE organizer who got an uncontrollable itch to paint and has been doing so for the past two years in spite of financial difficulties and the persuasion of his former colleagues to quit fooling around and come back and organize. Fasanella is a "primitive,"—that is, an untrained painter—a man whose urge for artistic creation is so strong that it has broken through the imposed layers of social training and financial restriction to find expression. But he differs from most "primitives" who see the world as a gaily-tinselled Christmas card or a bright dream of the past. He is concerned with the world he lives in and the problems which he and his fellow-workers face. He might be called a "social primitive," for he is a social painter with a message for his contemporaries. He has a lot to say and he says it the best way he knows how—directly and forcefully. He doesn't strive to be fashionable or acceptable. Fasanella paints because he is driven to tell others what life means to him. And it is rather wonderful to find other workers looking at these pictures, talking about them, criticizing them. Fasanella's art is getting to the people for whom it is intended. It is touching them in some way, moving them, getting them to think. What more can an artist ask?

Fasanella paints the people and the environment of New York City. But he is not simply a visual reporter. He sees the incidents of existence as part of a larger social pattern. He is aware of the contradictions, the inequalities, the injustices of our social existence. He peels the stone walls of a Park Avenue and a slum building to show the core of the contrast. He paints a blank-faced newsdealer hemmed in by the lurid fictional fantasies which he purveys. His young men play ball in the oppressive canyons or the barren lots of the city. There is a sadness in these pictures which is heightened by the very fact that the reportage is so perceptive and so directly expressed. Yet at the same time there is no pessimism. There is in all of them a basic vigor and health, flashes of richness and joy which cannot be destroyed by the grey weight of a monstrous environment.

Thousands of workers, coming to pay their dues, have already seen these paintings—and they have had an effect. A few have come forward to admit that they also paint in their spare time and would like to exhibit the results. Impressed by the reaction, the Wholesale and Warehouse Union itself is considering a permanent small gallery where it can show the artistic activity of its own members as well as that of professional artists. This is a step in the right direction. One can again have hopes about "getting unions to back art." A healthy and flourishing culture needs the participation of the people and what organization can integrate more effectively artistic production and audience consumption through financial and moral support than our trade unions?

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